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Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī: A Study of Early Conflicting Scholarly Methodologies

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Abstract
Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's repudiation of al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī has long been noted by a number of contemporary works and of these, the contributions of Smith, van Ess, Abū Ġudda, al-Quwatlī, Melchert and al-Barr have all been productive. Most of these works, however, provide no more than a general overview of this dispute and there is a consensus of sorts—as many classical works would also suggest—that the reason for Ibn Ḥanbal's rejection of al-Muḥāsibī was based on the latter's utilisation of scholastic theology (*kalām*). Although this appraisal may well be true, the exact nature of Ibn Ḥanbal's denunciation of al-Muḥāsibī is far from straightforward. Indeed, upon a thorough examination of classical Arabic sources a variety of other possibilities emerge. Therefore, it is the goal of this article to examine such works to reconstruct the nature of the debate surrounding the dispute between these two renowned personalities of Islam's formative period and discuss the possible reasons behind the conflict that existed between them, so as to shed further light upon the historical and intellectual development of the early Muslim, scholarly community as a whole.

Keywords
al-Muḥāsibī, Ibn Ḥanbal, *kalām, ḥadīṯ*, Sufism.

Imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's repudiation of al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī has long been noted by a number of contemporary works and of these, the contributions of Smith,[1] van Ess,[2] Abū Ġudda,[3] al-Quwatlī,[4] Melchert[5] and

[1] See Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad*, New York, AMS Press, 1973, pp. 14-16.

[2] See Josef van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī*, Bonn, Selbstverlag des Orientalischen Seminars der Universität Bonn («Bonner orientalistische Studien», Bd. 12 n.S.), 1961, pp. 28-30.

[3] See al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālat al-Mustaršidīn*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ġudda, Cairo, Dār al-salām, 1988, pp. 19-24.

[4] See al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *al-ʿAql wa-fahm al-Qurʾān*, ed. Ḥusayn al-Quwatlī, Beirut, Dār al-Kindī, 1982, pp. 36-48.

[5] See Christopher Melchert, "The Adversaries of Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal", *Arabica*, 44 (1997), pp. 242-244.

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al-Barr[6] have all been productive. Most of these works, however, provide no more than a general overview of this dispute and there is a consensus of sorts—as many classical works would also suggest—that the reason for Ibn Ḥanbal's rejection of al-Muḥāsibī was based on the latter's utilisation of scholastic theology (*kalām*). Although this appraisal may well be true, the exact nature of Ibn Ḥanbal's denunciation of al-Muḥāsibī is far from straightforward. Indeed, upon a thorough examination of classical Arabic sources a variety of other possibilities emerge. Therefore, it is the goal of this article to examine such works to reconstruct the nature of the debate surrounding the dispute between these two renowned personalities of Islam's formative period and discuss the possible reasons behind the conflict that existed between them, so as to shed further light upon the historical and intellectual development of the early Muslim, scholarly community as a whole.

The second/eighth century Muslim scholar Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, was born in Basra around 165/782 but later resided in Baghdad, albeit with a period of exile in Kūfa, until his death in 243/857. Al-Muḥāsibī was also known for his skills in many disciplines, including the Qurʾān, prophetic narration (*ḥadīṯ*) and scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*), to which a variety of biographical and historical sources testify.

It is, however, for his mastery in the field of Islamic spirituality and moral psychology that he is remembered. In this regard he may be considered to be a primer for the development of Islamic mysticism and this is substantiated by his favourable entries in classical Sufi apologetic works such as al-Sulamī's (d. 412/1021) *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*,[7] the *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ* of Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038),[8] the *Risāla fī l-Taṣawwuf* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qušayrī (d. 465/1074)[9] and al-Šaʿrānī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*,[10] as well as many others.[11]

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[6] See al-ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *al-Riʿāya li-ḥuqūq Allāh*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Barr, al-Manṣūra, Dār al-yaqīn, 1999, pp. 23-29.

[7] See Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyya*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn Šurayba, Cairo, Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1997, pp. 56-60.

[8] See Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Isḥāq [Abū Nuʿaym] al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, ed. Saʿīd Saʿd al-Dīn al-Iskandarī, Beirut, Dār iḥyāʾ al-turāṯ al-ʿarabī, 2001, X, pp. 64-92.

[9] See ʿAbd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin [Abū l-Qāsim] al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya fī ʿilm al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Maʿrūf Muṣṭafā Zurayq, Beirut, al-Maktaba l-ʿaṣriyya, 2001, pp. 429-30.

[10] See ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā. Lawāqiḥ al-anwār wa-ṭabaqāt al-aḫyār*, Cairo, Dār al-fikr al-ʿarabī, n.d., I, p. 64.

[11] See for example: Muḥammad b. Abū Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ibn Ẓafar al-Ṣiqillī, *Kitāb Anbāʾ nuǧabāʾ al-abnāʾ*, Beirut, Dār al-āfāq al-ǧadīda, 1980, pp. 148-50; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Lādiqī and Ḥayāt al-Lādiqī, Beirut, Dār al-maʿrifa, 2001, II, pp. 622-623; ʿUmar b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad Ibn Mulaqqin, *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyāʾ*, ed. Nūr al-Dīn Šurayba, Beirut, Dār al-maʿrifa, n.d., pp. 89-90 and ʿĪsā Ṣafāʾ al-Dīn al-Bundanīǧī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-Anwār fī manāqib al-aḫyār. Tarāǧim al-wuǧūh wa-l-aʿyān al-madfūnīn fī Baġdād wa-mā ǧāwarahā min al-bilād*, ed. Usāma Nāṣir al-Naqšabandī and Mahdī ʿAbd al-Ḥusayn al-Naǧm, Beirut, Dār al-ʿarabiyya li-l-mawsūʿāt, 2002, pp. 290-297.

The excellent reputation that al-Muḥāsibī enjoyed in scholarly circles generally and in Sufi circles specifically, may well have survived any controversy that surrounded him if the protagonist who repudiated him had been relatively unknown, or had been poorly regarded amongst the scholarly elite. However, al-Muḥāsibī was not spared this luxury, as the detractor in question was none other than Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the famous traditionist and imam of the Sunni community at the time. Thus, the status of Ibn Ḥanbal in Muslim society and his reputation as a steadfast, defender of 'orthodoxy' due to his dogged opposition to the doctrine of the created Qurʾān at the time of the inquisition (*al-miḥna*), meant that anyone who courted his disapproval would be castigated in no uncertain terms and in this sense, al-Muḥāsibī was no exception.

Thus, the rejection of al-Muḥāsibī is essentially contained in the following narration related to us by al-Ḫaṭīb al-Baġdādī (d. 463/1071) in his *Taʾrīḫ*:

> Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yaʿqūb informed me that Muḥammad b. Naʿīm al-Ḍabbī said that I heard al-imām Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Isḥāq—meaning al-Ṣibġī—say that I heard Ismāʿīl b. Isḥāq al-Sarrāǧ say, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said to me one day, "It has reached me that al-Ḥāriṭ—meaning al-Muḥāsibī—frequents your company, so would you bring me to your house and allow me to sit, such that he can't see me but I can listen to his discourse?" so I replied, "Your word is my command O Abū ʿAbd Allāh!" This initiative from Abū ʿAbd Allāh pleased me and so I made for al-Ḥāriṭ and requested him to attend that night and said, "And ask your companions to come with you." He replied, "O Ismāʿīl, they are many so do not give them more than pressed oil (*kusb*) and dates, or otherwise more than that you will not be able." So I carried out all that he had commanded me and went to Abū ʿAbd Allāh and informed him, who came after the sunset prayer (*al-maġrib*) and ascended to a room in the house, where he busied himself with reading a portion of the Qurʾān (*wird*) until he had finished. Al-Ḥāriṭ and his companions then came, ate and stood for the evening prayer (*al-ʿatama*) and they prayed no further prayer after it. They then sat in front of al-Ḥāriṭ silently; not one of them said a word until almost half the night had passed, when one of them asked al-Ḥāriṭ a question and he began to speak whilst his companions listened attentively, some of them weeping and others crying out during his discourse. Then, I went up to check on Abū ʿAbd Allāh and found that he had wept until he lost consciousness, so I went back to them and they remained in this state until the morning, when they stood and went on their separate ways. I then went back up to Abū ʿAbd Allāh and his state had changed and I asked him, "How did you find them O Abū ʿAbd Allāh?" To which he replied, "I don't think that I have seen a people such as these nor anyone speak regarding the realties [of faith] (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*) like this man, yet despite what I have said, I do not think that you should keep their company." Then he stood and left.[12]

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[12] See al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, pp. 214-15; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī

It is this peculiar anecdotal statement, which has set into motion the debate regarding Ibn Ḥanbal's censuring of al-Muḥāsibī.[13] The story itself is difficult to qualify as it contains many apparent contradictions. Firstly, as unlikely as it may seem, the first step in the story is taken by Ibn Ḥanbal himself by instigating the secretive observance of al-Muḥāsibī's teaching of his disciples and upon hearing his discourse, he is not only suitably impressed with its content but moreover, is overcome with emotion whilst listening to it. Similarly, he seemingly endorses the content of the discourse and states his approval of its originator and his associates, yet in the very same sentence he considers this form of instruction unsuitable for the very man who arranged his attendance at al-Muḥāsibī's night vigil. Thus, the semiotics of this narrative prove virtually indecipherable and as such, have produced a great deal of debate regarding the nature of Ibn Ḥanbal's dislike of al-Muḥāsibī's method and teaching, which will be categorised and will be summarised here in the following sections.

Al-Muḥāsibī's Method was Innovative (*bidʿa*)

One of the popular views expressed regarding the dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī is that the former scholar considered both al-Muḥāsibī's approach and methodology innovative (*bidʿa*) in a pejorative sense. Although there is no direct statement from Ibn Ḥanbal on this particular issue regarding al-Muḥāsibī, we find some evidence to suggest this from various indirect sources. For example, one of Ibn Ḥanbal's more celebrated students was Abū Zurʿa l-Rāzī (d. 264/878), who, when he asked concerning al-Muḥāsibī and his books, as al-Ḫaṭīb informs us in his *Taʾrīḫ*, said:

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and ʿAlī Muḥammad ʿUmar, Cairo, Maktabat al-Ḫānǧī, 1979, pp. 239-40; al-Ḏahabī, *Tāʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 208; *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-riǧāl*, I, p. 430; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Šāfiʿiyya l-kubrā*, II, p. 279; al-Šaʿrānī, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, I, p. 64 and al-Bundanīǧī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-Anwār fī manāqib al-aḫyār*, pp. 291-2.

[13] The peculiarity of the story is pointed out by al-Ḏahabī who states, "Ismāʿīl [b. Isḥāq al-Sarrāǧ] was considered reliable by al-Dāraquṭnī and this story is authentic in its chain of transmission (*ṣaḥīḥat al-sanad*) but rejected (*munkara*); it doesn't find acceptance in my heart and I consider it highly unlikely that something like this would be done by Aḥmad."

In addition, the final part of the story is even more peculiar in al-Bundanīǧī's version where he claims that Ibn Ḥanbal said, "It has reached me that there are circles of remembrance (*maǧālis al-ḏikr*) in which people gather and if these are such circles, then I do not disavow anything of them."

See al-Ḏahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-riǧāl*, I, p. 430 and al-Bundanīǧī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-Anwār fī manāqib al-aḫyār*, p. 292.

> Do not dare read such books (*iyyāka wa-hāḏihi -l-kutub*)! They are books of innovation and misguidance (*bidaʿ wa-ḍalālāt*). Concern yourself only with transmission (*al-aṯar*) as you will find within it that which will suffice you of such works." It was said to him that within such books one may find beneficial lessons (*ʿibra*) to which he replied, "Whoever does not find beneficial lessons in the Book of Allāh, Exalted is He, then he will find no such beneficial lesson in these books either. Has it reached you that Mālik b. Anas or Sufyān al-Ṯawrī or al-Awzāʿī or any of the previous imams wrote books about fleeting thoughts (*al-ḫaṭarāt*), satanic insinuation (*al-wasāwis*) and other such things? They are a people who have contradicted the people of knowledge (*ahl al-ʿilm*); one time they come to us with al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī, another with ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Dubaylī, another with Ḥātim al-Aṣamm and yet another with Šaqīq [al-Balḫī]." Then he said, "How swift people are in turning to innovation![14]

The polarised view presented here is indicative of the stance adopted by many of the traditionists of the time and the significance of the phraseology cannot be underestimated. Al-Rāzī begins with a strict censuring of approaching such works, clarifying that as far as he was concerned they are nothing more than books that contain erroneous teachings and conjecture. The 'true' methodology is consequently elucidated as being a strict and uncompromising adherence to both the Qurʾān and the prophetic practice, as laid down in the *ḥadīṯ* literature, which is further evidenced by the fact that none of the earlier scholars contributed in terms of written treatises other than in these two primary fields of Islamic learning.

Thus, we are left with the impression of a clash of methodologies, in the sense that the works and subject matter of al-Muḥāsibī and others of his ilk were simply unheard of and as such, constituted a departure from the teachings of the previous, exemplary generations. The context of this clash is further illustrated by the terms "…fleeting thoughts (*al-ḫaṭarāt*), satanic insinuation (*al-wasāwis*) and other such things…", which indicates that the inner workings of the human being were not a subject for discussion and the dismissive nature of the phraseology indicates the speaker's contempt for such issues. The people (*qawm*) involved in this field of enquiry are also alluded to and in addition to al-Muḥāsibī, include other luminaries who were to be found later in the ranks of celebrated Sufis and al-Rāzī also clarifies his contempt for the 'new' spiritual and mystical direction taken by some sections of Islam's scholarly community.

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[14] See al-Baġdādī, *Taʾrīḫ Baġdād*, VIII, p. 215; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Tablīs Iblīs*, ed. Ayman Ṣāliḥ, Cairo, Dār al-ḥadīth, 1999, pp. 171-2; al-Ḏahabī, *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, pp. 208-9; *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-riǧāl*, I, p. 431; *Siyar Aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, XII, p. 112; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Tahḏīb al-Tahḏīb*, I, p. 327.

It is interesting to note that despite being al-Rāzī's teacher, Ibn Ḥanbal is not mentioned here amongst the other eminent jurists or traditionists of the time. Nevertheless, we can assume that Ibn Ḥanbal's methodology did not differ drastically from his contemporaries as we find that his teacher, the celebrated traditionist ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814) is reported to have said, "It is forbidden for a man to speak regarding an issue of religion except [he bases it on] something that he heard from a reliable narrator (*ṯiqa*)."[15] In a comparable statement, Ibn Ḥanbal himself said to al-Maymūnī, "O Abū l-Ḥasan do not dare speak on an issue unless you have a proof (*imām*) regarding it."[16] Similarly, when asked regarding the issue of fleeting thoughts (*al-ḫaṭarāt*) and satanic insinuation (*al-wasāwis*) mentioned above, he is reported to have replied, "Neither the Companions or the Successors spoke regarding them."[17] Illustrating this point further, Ibn Rağab al-Ḥanbalī [ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Šihāb al-Dīn] (d. 795/1393) states:

> Aḥmad and others only censured those amongst the Sufis who discussed fleeting thoughts (*al-ḫaṭarāt*) and satanic insinuation (*al-wasāwis*), as their statements in this regard were not based on any legal evidence (*dalīl šarʿī*) but rather, [were based] on personal opinion and experiential knowledge (*raʾy wa-ḏawq*). Similarly, he would reject statements on issues of the permissible and the forbidden (*al-ḥalāl wa-l-ḥarām*) based purely upon personal opinion (*raʾy*) without any legal proof.[18]

In addition to the discussion regarding various aspects of the esoteric and psychological religious life, Ibn Kaṯīr (d. 774/1372) adds a further possibility for the proposal that Ibn Ḥanbal rejected al-Muḥāsibī on the basis of innovative practice, saying:

> Indeed, he [Aḥmad] disliked that because their discourse contained aspects of asceticism and extreme behaviour that had no legal basis and a precise form of introspective examination, that was meticulous and exaggerated but which had not been commanded. Due to this when Abū Zurʿa l-Rāzī read al-Ḥāriṯ's book entitled *al-Riʿāya* he said, "This is innovation (*bidʿa*)" and said to the man who brought the book, "You should follow that which Mālik, al-Ṯawrī, al-Awzāʿī and al-Layṯ followed and leave this, as indeed it is innovation."[19]

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[15] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, p. 6.

[16] Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, p. 231.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

[18] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Šihāb al-Dīn [Ibn Rağab] al-Ḥanbalī, *Ǧāmiʿ al-ʿUlūm wa-l-ḥikam fī šarḥ ḫamsīn ḥadīṯ min ǧawāmiʿ al-kalim*, ed. Šuʿayb al-Arnāʾūṭ and Ibrāhīm Bāǧis, Beirut, Muʾassasat al-risāla, 1994, II, p. 104.

[19] Ismāʿīl Ibn Kaṯīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya*, ed. Aḥmad Abū Mulḥim, ʿAlī Nağīb ʿAṭwī, Fuʾād al-Sayyid and Mahdī Nāṣir al-Dīn, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1988, X, p. 344.

Upon examining these various views regarding al-Muḥāsibī's practice and methodology we find that they are far more difficult to prove than one might at first imagine. Regarding Abū Zurʿa l-Rāzī's censuring of al-Muḥāsibī, in which he states that one must restrict one's learning to the Qurʾān and *ḥadīṯ*, then of course when examining al-Muḥāsibī's works we find a great deal of personal introspection is evident. However, at the same time what we also find that he includes a plethora of Qurʾān verses and multifarious *ḥadīṯ*, many of which he transmitted personally, to add form, structure and authenticity to his writings. Thus, the claim that al-Muḥāsibī's teachings existed outside the sphere of the Islamic paradigm is for the most part, simply erroneous.

The next accusation from al-Rāzī's perspective that none of the previous scholars had written on the topic of fleeting thoughts (*al-ḫaṭarāt*), satanic insinuation (*al-wasāwis*) and Ibn Ḥanbal's perspective that both the Companion and Successor generations had not discussed this, is equally misleading. The fact that a topic had not been discussed in a written form in the formative generations of Muslims does not necessarily mean that they were not aware of it and indeed, the traditional Muslim view holds that many of the religious disciplines that became an intrinsic part of learning were not discussed in the technical sense they inferred at a later date. Thus, from the traditional Islamic perspective an example of this includes the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), which had been utilised practically from the time of the Companions but did not reach fruition until its codification in al-Šāfiʿī's (d. 204/820) *al-Risāla*. Other examples include the various *ḥadīṯ* disciplines that both Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Rāzī would have been familiar with, such as *ḥadīṯ* terminology (*muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīṯ*) and the biographical *ṭabaqāt* and *riǧāl* genres, which were developed purely to authenticate *ḥadīṯ* and which, had not been fully developed even in the time of these two eminent traditionists.

Similarly, the most controversial religious incident of the period, the *miḥna*, was driven by an issue never discussed in the initial generations of Muslims, i.e. that of the created Qurʾān and indeed, Ibn Ḥanbal himself engaged—admittedly under duress—in this debate to defend the 'orthodox' view. Thus, we can conclude that the fact that an earlier generation of scholars did not discuss a topic does not exclude its inclusion in a later scholarly tradition. As such, the topic in question, i.e. the introspective thought process is in fact alluded to in the Qurʾān, in the following verse, "Indeed, We created the human being and We know that which whispers in his own soul; We are closer to him than his jugular vein" (50, 16). This being the case and in addition to the body of material related in Qurʾān and *ḥadīṯ* regarding the human soul,[20]

[20] See for example: Gavin Picken, "Tazkiyat al-Nafs: The Quranic Paradigm", *Journal of Quranic Studies*, VII/2 (2005), pp. 101-127 and *The Concept of Tazkiyat al-Nafs in Islam in the*

this provided al-Muḥāsibī the theoretical, practical and legal basis for much of what he dedicated his life and works.

In addition, the notion that Ibn Ḥanbal rejected al-Muḥāsibī on the basis of his extreme asceticism is equally questionable, as the biographical material dealing with Aḥmad's life is replete with examples of his own extreme asceticism, which also on occasion seems beyond the normal boundaries of religious practice.[21] This 'otherworldliness' of Ibn Ḥanbal is so celebrated to the extent that even the Sufi apologetic works include anecdotes from him in this regard as al-Qušayrī's *al-Risāla* contains the following narration:

> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal said, "Asceticism (*al-zuhd*) is of three types: the first is to leave that which is forbidden (*al-ḥarām*) and this is the asceticism of the common folk (*al-ʿawāmm*). The second is to leave that which is superfluous from the permissible (*faḍl al-ḥalāl*) and this is the asceticism of the elite (*al-ḫawāṣṣ*). The third is to leave that which occupies the devotee from any other than God the Exalted and this is the asceticism of the gnostics (*al-ʿārifīn*)."[22]

Thus, in summary we may conclude that the basis of the argument posited to prove al-Muḥāsibī's 'unorthodox' teaching is at best contentious and rather than being indicative of his innovative practice, could equally be viewed as being a by-product of the rigidity of the traditionist faction that was in the ascendancy in the post-*miḥna* period. One of the major factors in this stance adopted by this traditionist faction—also referred to as the *Ḥanābila*[23]—seemingly arises from their interpretation of what constitutes innovation, in the sense that from the statements of both Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Rāzī it seems to

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Light of the Works of al-Ḥārith al-Muḥāsibī, unpublished PhD Thesis, Leeds, the University of Leeds, 2005, pp. 83-90.

[21] See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, pp. 145-201 *passim*; Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, pp. 255-260; Walter M. Patton, *Aḥmed Ibn Ḥanbal and the Miḥna*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1897, pp. 139-172 *passim*, 178-182, and Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography. The Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Maʾmūn*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (« Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilisation Series »), 2000, pp. 138-151 *passim*.

[22] Al-Qušayrī, *al-Risāla l-Qušayriyya fi ʿilm al-taṣawwuf*, p. 119.

[23] This term being the plural of the word *Ḥanbalī* proves difficult to define as it is used to denote both the jurisprudential school and the theological stance adopted by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, as well as being used to infer an uncompromising and rigid position on religious matters. What we can say here, however, is that the phrase when used to describe certain sections of society at the time of al-Muḥāsibī did not refer to the school of jurisprudence, as this had yet to be formed but rather, the theological stance adopted by Ibn Ḥanbal against the Muʿtazilites and perhaps, a dogmatic and obdurate 'attitude' that accompanied it amongst Aḥmad's followers. See Muḥammad Abū Zahra, *Ibn Ḥanbal. Ḥayātuhu wa-ʿaṣruhu wa-ārāʾuhu wa-fiqhuhu*, pp. 356-65 and Henri Laoust, "Ḥanābila", *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden-London, E. J. Brill and Luzac & Co., 1960, III, pp. 158-62.

infer a practice or belief that either contradicts the religious praxis and creedal system of the earliest generations, or indeed, topics that were never discussed by them. Thus, their understanding of the term *bidʿa* was in reality very restricted and limiting and it may well have been the case that al-Muḥāsibī understood *bidʿa* to be a practice or belief that had no basis or precedent in the revelatory sources of the Qurʾān and *ḥadīṯ*, rather than his contemporaries' rigid interpretation. As such, the source of this dispute is in fact a methodological one, on the one hand between a group of scholars whose world view was extremely obdurate and uncompromising, rejecting outright any teaching which in their view contradicted their system, or indeed was simply 'new' and on the other, a scholar who having grounded his teaching in the primary sources, aimed to treat the moral and psychological ailments of his peers.

Finally and perhaps most importantly, this view does not solve the conundrum of the original narration related by al-Ḫaṭīb, if one bears in mind the strictness of the stance of the Ḥanbalī/traditionist faction to *bidʿa* generally and the position of Ibn Ḥanbal in particular,[24] which is that if Ibn Ḥanbal had considered al-Muḥāsibī's discourse so innovative, as we are lead to believe, then why did he stay until the morning listening to it? The uncompromising nature of Ibn Ḥanbal on such an issue would lead us to imagine that he would not have stayed even a moment longer than necessary, if this was really the case and therefore, we must consider other possibilities in this regard.

Al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Ḥanbal were Contemporaneous (*aqrān*)

Of the less popular explanations for Ibn Ḥanbal's dislike of al-Muḥāsibī is that they were contemporaries who may have disagreed upon an issue of religious knowledge which in turn, led to a dispute of a personal nature, causing Ibn Ḥanbal to react in the way that he did. In this regard, Islamic scholarship, particularly in the field of *ḥadīṯ* through the genre of literature dealing with the disparagement and acceptability of narrators known as *al-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, has discussed incidents of such a nature and developed its own particular stance regarding it. Accordingly, we find the following statement from al-Subkī:

> So it is appropriate for you, O seeker of guidance (*al-mustaršid*) that you adopt the correct etiquette with the previous scholars (*al-aʾimma*) and do not look at the statements of some of them regarding others except if they produce clear

[24] For examples of Ibn Ḥanbal's treatment of 'innovators' see Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, pp. 236-41.

> evidence. Thus, if you are able to interpret [such incidents] or have a good opinion (*ḥusn al-ẓann*) [regarding them] then do so, otherwise 'turn a blind eye'[25] regarding what occurred between them as you were not created for this purpose and concern yourself with that which concerns you and do not concern yourself with that which does not. A student of knowledge (*ṭālib al-ʿilm*) remains noble in my sight until he delves into that which occurred between the predecessors and judges [in favour] of some rather than others. So dare not incline [to one or the other] in that which occurred between Abū Ḥanīfa and Sufyān al-Ṭawrī, or Mālik [b. Anas] and Abū Ḍiʾb, or Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ and al-Nasāʾī, or al-Ḥāriṭ al-Muḥāsibī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, which continued until the time of Ibn ʿAbd al-Salām and al-Taqī b. al-Ṣalāḥ. As indeed, if you busied yourself with this I fear for your destruction! These people were renowned scholars (*al-aʾimma*), their statements may be interpreted in more than one way and perhaps some of them were not understood. As such, we can do nothing except be pleased with them and be silent regarding what occurred between them in the same way that we do regarding that which occurred between the Companions, may God be pleased with them.[26]

Thus, we can see from al-Subkī's comments that with regard to disputes between scholarly personalities, including that which occurred between al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Ḥanbal, he adopts a non-inflammatory approach, which attempts to diffuse the situation. It is interesting to note, however, that there is an exception to this approach which is indicated by the phrase, "…except if they produce clear evidence (*burhān wāḍiḥ*)", a factor that up until now in the texts previously quoted, Ibn Ḥanbal has not alluded to.

Similarly, it is equally interesting to note that al-Subkī also attempts to diffuse the situation further and maintain reverence for such luminaries by suggesting that in some cases the reasons behind the discourse of certain scholars are difficult to discern, indicated by the phrase, "These people were renowned imams, their statements may be interpreted in more than one way and perhaps some of them were not understood." In the particular case under discussion here, i.e. the dispute between al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Ḥanbal, this is certainly the case as Ibn Ḥanbal did not qualify further his statement, "…yet despite what I have said, I do not think that you should keep their company" and this is equally demonstrated by the number of opinions and amount of discussion that this comment has generated.

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[25] The literal translation of the term used would be 'to turn one's cheek away (*fa-ḍrib ṣafḥan ʿan*)' meaning not to even look but I have used 'turn a blind eye', which appears a useful equivalent in English.

[26] See ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAlī l-Subkī, *Qāʿida fī l-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, in *Arbaʿ rasāʾil fī ʿulūm al-Ḥadīṯ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ġudda, Beirut, Maktabat al-maṭbūʿāt al-islāmiyya, 1999, pp. 59-65 and *Ṭabaqāt al-Šāfiʿiyya l-kubrā*, II, p. 278.

Thus, the approach of traditionists in assessing the reliability of narrators is further elucidated in a comparative discussion in *al-Rafʿ wa-l-takmīl fī l-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl* of the more contemporary *ḥadīṯ* scholar ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Luknawī (d. 1304/1886) who states:

> If disparagement [of a narrator] (*al-ǧarḥ*) is a result of fanaticism (*taʿaṣṣub*), or enmity (*ʿadāwa*), or personal dislike (*munāfara*), then it is disparagement which is rejected (*ǧarḥ mardūd*). As such, the statement of *al-imām* Mālik [b. Anas] regarding Muḥammad b. Isḥāq—the author of *al-Maġāzī*—that he was a "deceiving charlatan" (*daǧǧāl min al-daǧāǧila*) is not accepted… [Similarly] al-Nasāʾī's vilification (*qadḥ*) of Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī, or [Sufyān] al-Ṯawrī's vilification of Abū Ḥanīfa, or [Yaḥyā] Ibn Maʿīn's vilification of al-Šāfiʿī, or Aḥmad's vilification of al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī would also not be accepted… So do not dare delve into that which occurred between Abū Ḥanīfa and Sufyān… or between Aḥmad and al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī.[27]

As such, al-Luknawī goes a step further than the non-inflammatory approach of al-Subkī inferring that not only should such disparaging or ambiguous statements of scholars regarding their peers be 'overlooked' but that they should even be rejected due to the underlying reasons for such comments being not only contentious but possibly even occurred as a result of personal dislike. Thus, according to al-Luknāwī, Ibn Ḥanbal's comment regarding al-Muḥāsibī may be cast aside altogether because it is impossible to know the true reasons behind it.

Shedding further light on this al-Subkī comments, "And what must also be taken into consideration—and, as *šayḫ al-Islām* Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd has pointed out—is the dispute that occurred between many of the Sufis and the traditionists (*aṣḥāb al-ḥadīṯ*), as indeed many of them imposed statements regarding one another, as some of them did regarding al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī and others."[28] Thus, we are given the impression that due to the methodological differences alluded to above, many traditionists often deprecated those they considered 'Sufis' and as such, when examining the disputes between scholars of these two denominations this factor must be taken into consideration. Therefore, the inference here is also that the comments of traditionists regarding other non-traditionists and Sufis in particular, should be rejected due to the nature of the methodological dispute between them.

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[27] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Luknawī, *al-Rafʿ wa-l-takmīl fī l-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ġudda, Aleppo, Maktab al-maṭbūʿāt al-islāmiyya, 1963, pp. 187-200 *passim*.

[28] Al-Subkī, *Qāʿida fī l-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, p. 54 and *Ṭabaqāt al-Šāfiʿiyya l-kubrā*, II, p. 19.

This is further confirmed by Ibn al-Ǧawzī, who demonstrating his uncompromising Ḥanbalite tendency, comments before briefly mentioning the dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī:

> Indeed, *al-imām* Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal due to his extreme adherence to the prophetic practice (*al-sunna*) and his forbidding of innovation (*al-bidʿa*) criticised a number of the elite (*al-aḫyār*), if they did anything that contradicted the *sunna* and his statements in this regard should be interpreted as providing good counsel in religious matters (*al-naṣīḥa li-l-dīn*).[29]

Thus, from the above statement even Ibn al-Ǧawzī admits that, due to his own strict interpretation and application of Islamic principles, Ibn Ḥanbal would disparage those whom he considered to contradict such fundamentals, despite their being from the scholarly ranks of the community "*al-aḫyār*". However, rather than interpreting this tendency as a case of, "… providing good counsel in religious matters (*al-naṣīḥa li-l-dīn*)", as Ibn al-Ǧawzī has done, one may equally interpret this in the light of the discussion above, provided by traditionists dealing with the discipline of *al-ǧarḥ wa-l-taʿdīl*, as being the result of a stance taken due to a different methodological approach being adopted.

Further clarifying the concept amongst scholarship that there was almost a 'natural' departure between the traditionists and the 'Sufis', al-Ḏahabī, having quoted the remarks made by al-Rāzī,[30] comments in his *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl*:

> Where are the likes of al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī?! How then if Abū Zurʿa had seen the books of the later Sufis, such as the *Qūt al-qulūb* of Abū Ṭālib [al-Makkī] and where are the likes of the *Qūt*?! How then if he had seen *Baḥǧat al-asrār* of Abū Ǧahḍam, and *Ḥaqāʾiq al-tafsīr* of al-Sulamī?! He would have lost his mind (*la-ṭāra lubbuhu*)! How then if he had seen the works of Abū Ḥāmid [al-Ġazzālī] al-Ṭūsī bearing in mind the many fabricated *ḥadīṯ* (*al-mawḍūʿāt*) there are in *al-Iḥyāʾ*?! How then if he had seen *al-Ġunya* of *šayḫ* ʿAbd al-Qādir [al-Ǧīlānī]?! How then if he had seen *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* and *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* [of Ibn ʿArabī]?! Indeed when al-Ḥāriṯ was the spokesman of such people in his era (*lisān al-qawm fī ḏālika l-ʿaṣr*), his contemporaries consisted of one thousand scholars of *ḥadīṯ*, including the likes of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and Ibn Rāhawayh but when the pole of Gnostics (*quṭb al-ʿārifīn*) became the author of *al-Fuṣūṣ* [i.e. Ibn ʿArabī] the scholars of [in that time] were the likes of Ibn Walad al-Ḫamsīn and Ibn Šaḥāna.[31]

On examining this excerpt in the light of the quote from al-Rāzī, we may conclude that, even if al-Ḏahabī accepted his claim that al-Muḥāsibī was a

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[29] Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, pp. 239-41.

[30] See p. 341 above.

[31] Al-Ḏahabī, *Mīzān al-iʿtidāl fī naqd al-riǧāl*, I, p. 431.

proponent of innovation, he clearly thought that al-Muḥāsibī's *bidʿa* was insignificant compared with the 'innovations' of the later exponents of Sufism, to the extent that he concludes that, if al-Rāzī had encountered these later works he would have gone insane! Similarly, al-Ḏahabī also takes into consideration the factors of space and time, in the sense that he attempts to make an appraisal of al-Muḥāsibī within his own historical context. This being the case, he quite correctly notes that this era was the 'golden age of traditionism' to the extent that not only was the vast majority of scholarship was concerned with the transmission and authenticating of narrations but also that this period contained many of the authorities in the field of *ḥadīṯ*, who would be considered its greatest exponents and experts for centuries to come. Thus, bearing this factor in mind and also taking into consideration the 'clash of methodologies' between the traditionists and other sections of the scholarly community, it is hardly surprising that al-Muḥāsibī came under scrutiny and consequently, incurred the wrath of the *ḥadīṯ* experts who were in the ascendancy in the post-*miḥna* period.

In a similar vein, further accentuating the 'clash of methodologies' between the traditionists and the nascent Sufi fraternity, Ibn Ḫaldūn (d. 808/1406) comments in his *Šifāʾ al-sāʾil*:

> The basis of the story between al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Ḥanbal, was Ibn Ḥanbal's belief that it is not permissible for someone studying Sacred Law (*al-šarīʿa*) to have a *šayḫ* to whom he submits his affairs but rather that acquisition [of knowledge] should be from the Book [i.e. the Qurʾān] and the Prophetic example (*al-sunna*) [directly].[32]

As such, this is a further indication of the disparate approaches of these two scholars, which appear on the surface to have created an unsolvable rift between them.

Therefore, at least from a superficial perspective, the fact that these two eminent Muslim personalities were contemporaneous may be a possible cause of their discord. However, I would suggest here that there is little indication that the dispute in question was in fact fuelled by personal feelings, but rather, that their methodologies of religious practice were entirely different, as was shown in this section and even more so in section above dealing with the contention that al-Muḥāsibī's method was innovative (*bidʿa*). Despite this, however, there remains yet another major factor in the relationship between

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[32] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḫaldūn, *Šifāʾ al-sāʾil fī tahḏīb al-masāʾil*, ed. Iġnāṭiyūs ʿAbduh Ḫalīfa l-Yasūʿī, Beirut, al-Maṭbaʿa l-kāṯūlīkiyya, n.d., p. 64 quoted in al-Muḥāsibī, *al-ʿAql wa-Fahm al-Qurʾān*, ed. al-Quwātlī, p. 45.

al-Muḥāsibī and Ibn Ḥanbal and since this is arguably the most important it will be dealt with at length in the next section.

Al-Muḥāsibī's Utilisation of Scholastic Theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*)

Of the most popular and regularly cited reasons for Ibn Ḥanbal's abjuration of al-Muḥāsibī is the suggestion that Aḥmad's dislike of al-Ḥāriṭ stems from the latter's utilisation of scholastic theology (*ilm al-kalām*) and in particular, in refuting 'unorthodox' views, especially those of the Muʿtazilites and Šiʿites.[33] The fact that al-Muḥāsibī employed dialectical and rational argument in some of his works is well established, as this technique is tangible during his discussion of the aforementioned sects within a minority of his works, namely in particular *Māhiyyat al-ʿaql* and *Fahm al-Qurʾān*.[34] Therefore, this suggestion requires further qualification not from the perspective of al-Muḥāsibī as his use of *kalām* is known, but rather, one has to first clarify Ibn Ḥanbal's view of this subject, so as to establish the validity of this concept.

In fact, upon examining the classical biographical and historical sources, one finds a trend amongst the more strict traditionist and jurisprudential ranks towards vehement censuring of the use of *ʿilm al-kalām* in any format and under any circumstance. As such, we find that when it was said to one of Ibn Ḥanbal's teachers, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Mahdī (d. 198/814), "Such and such (*fulān*) has authored a book regarding the *sunna* as a refutation against someone else", he replied, "Did he refute [him] with the Book of God [i.e. the Qurʾān] and the practice of His Prophet (*sunnat nabiyyihi*), may the peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him?" It was said to him, "[He refuted him] with scholastic theology (*kalām*)", to which he replied, "Then he has refuted falsehood with falsehood (*bāṭil bi-bāṭil*)."[35] Thus, we find that this view—representative of the traditionist stance towards *kalām*—not only rejected it as a method since it was considered falsehood (*bāṭil*) but moreover, its use was

[33] It is worth noting here that al-Ḥaṭīb contends that there are theological issues other than those alluded to in this section, in which al-Muḥāsibī contradicts the creed of 'orthodox' Sunnism. However, most of these are derived by examining al-Muḥāsibī's views from his works, in particular *Fahm al-Qurʾān*, whereas the goal of this section is to explore this contention from the classical primary sources as a whole, so as to reach the essence of this dispute. See Ḫālid b. Sulaymān al-Ḥaṭīb, *Fikr al-Ḥāriṭ al-Muḥāsibī l-Ṣūfī fī mīzān al-Kitāb wa-l-sunna*, unpublished M.A. thesis, Riyadh, Ǧāmiʿat al-Malik Saʿūd, 1997, pp. 40-7.

[34] See for example: al-Muḥāsibī, *al-ʿAql wa-fahm al-Qurʾān*, ed. al-Quwatlī, pp. 201-219 and 253-255 and *Šaraf al-ʿaql wa-māhiyyatuhu*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAṭā, pp. 17-31.

[35] See al-Iṣfahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, IX, pp. 11-12.

even rejected in refuting others who may well employ it within a religious discourse, despite its purpose being the defence the 'orthodox' position.

In a more scathing attack on those who engage in scholastic theology and dialectics, another of Ibn Ḥanbal's teachers—the renowned jurist Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Šāfiʿī (d. 204/820)—is reported to have said, "No one engaged in *kalām* and was successful."[36] He also said, "For a person to be afflicted with everything that Allāh has forbidden apart from polytheism (*al-širk*) is better than if he were to engage in *al-kalām*."[37] Similarly, his own judgement regarding scholastic theology was clear as he stated:

> My opinion and my position (*raʾyī wa-maḏhabī*) regarding those who engage in scholastic theology (*aṣḥāb al-kalām*) is that they should be beaten with palm branches (*al-ǧarīd*), put on camels and paraded amongst the clans and tribes and that it should be proclaimed, "This is the recompense of anyone who left the Book of God [i.e. the Qurʾān] and the prophetic practice (*al-sunna*) and engaged in *al-kalām*."[38]

As for Ibn Ḥanbal himself, he had an equally negative view of scholastic theology and dialectics, as it is reported that he said, "Do not sit with those who engage in scholastic theology (*ahl al-kalām*) even if they defend the Prophetic practice (*al-sunna*)."[39]

Thus, the traditionists and jurists of the period are portrayed as holding an uncompromising and rigid view regarding both scholastic theology and those who engaged in it. This can be understood in several ways: firstly, they held the view that Islam was a revealed religion and it was to be understood from its revelatory sources, these being entirely sufficient to understand and interpret this religious tradition. Secondly, bearing in mind the 'self sufficient' nature of the revelatory sources, there was simply no need for another interpretative method, such as scholastic theology, to be employed and this being the case, such a subsidiary interpretative method was extraneous and thus, surplus to requirement. Thirdly, since scholastic theology by its very nature relies on dialectic and rational discourse to prove its point rather than basing an argument exclusively on a Qurʾānic verse or prophetic *ḥadīṯ*, then such a method had no basis from a religious or legalistic perspective and was to be rejected as innovation (*bidʿa*), even if it were to employed to defend the 'orthodox' stance from other 'innovative' sects. Fourthly, such scholars, from their perspective, had seen the 'negative' effect of engaging in *kalām*, since many of the 'innovations'

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 104.
[39] Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, p. 205.

of groups such as the Qadarites, Muʿtazilites and the Ǧahmites had been due to their delving into theological debate on a 'rational' basis rather than a 'revelatory' one, which in many ways ultimately led to the tribulations of the *miḥna*.

Therefore, it is hardly surprising that anyone found employing scholastic theology, even if it were to for the noble goal of defending the 'orthodox' position by using the methods of the 'unorthodox' against them, was strongly censured and vilified. Similarly, it is equally no surprise that al-Muḥāsibī was subject to such vilification, as he was clearly involved in the defence of the beliefs of Sunni 'orthodoxy' by utilising rational and dialectic methods, comparable to those of the sects with whom he was engaged, such as those of the Muʿtazilites.

Bearing these factors in mind and despite his 'non inflammatory' approach to the dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī alluded to in the aforementioned discussion, al-Subkī also concedes that al-Muḥāsibī's utilisation of scholastic theology may well have been a factor in this issue, as the following excerpt shows:

> Know that *al-imām* Aḥmad, may God be pleased with him, was highly critical of anyone who spoke regarding scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) out of fear that it would lead to that which is inappropriate. There is little doubt that to remain silent regarding it [*kalām*] is preferable provided there is no need to do so and to speak concerning it when there is no need is innovation (*bidʿa*) and al-Ḥāriṯ had indeed spoken on some issues of scholastic theology; Abū l-Qāsim al-Nāṣirābāḏī said, "It has reached me that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal repudiated him for this reason." I say: it is presumed that al-Ḥāriṯ only spoke [regarding *kalām*] when the need arose.[40]

Thus, while acknowledging Ibn Ḥanbal's strict censuring of *kalām* under all circumstances due to its potential to open discussions of a theological nature that may even be impermissible or at the very least misleading, al-Subkī differentiates between this approach and another, which suggests that scholastic theology may be employed when the need to do so arises. If no such need arises, however, then to introduce *kalām* into the discourse is, according to al-Subkī at least, innovative. On this premise al-Subkī sets out to defend al-Muḥāsibī's position by suggesting that he did not engage in dialectical debate for its own sake but rather, when the need arose to defend the Sunni 'orthodox' position from the onslaught of the rationalising theology of the

[40] Al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Šāfiʿiyya l-kubrā*, II, pp. 278-9.

Muʿtazilites—an objective, as we have already seen, that Ibn Hanbal found equally unacceptable.

Arguing from a similar perspective, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazzālī (d. 505/1111), provides a similar defence of al-Muḥāsibī's approach. Al-Ġazzālī in his typically lucid style, presents what he considers to be representative of the views of these scholars by way of an imaginary dialogue and then gives his own conclusion, as we find in the following quote from *al-Munqiḏ*:

> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal rejected al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī's writing of refutations against the Muʿtazilites, so al-Ḥāriṯ said, "To refute innovation (*al-bidʿa*) is a compulsory duty (*farḍ*)" and Aḥmad replied, "Indeed, but you first make mention of their deviant view (*šubha*) and then you reply to it; what guarantee do you have that someone won't examine this deviant view such that it sticks in his mind and then he will not be attentive to the reply, or give it consideration yet not understand its full significance?" What Aḥmad has mentioned is true but only in the case of a deviant view that is not widespread or well known. However, if such a deviant view became well known, then to reply to it is compulsory and it is not possible to reply to it without first making mention of it.[41]

Therefore, al-Ġazzālī's first defence of al-Muḥāsibī's refutations against the Muʿtazilites comes from a legalistic perspective, i.e. that it is a compulsory duty (*farḍ*) to do so, perhaps a view that Ibn Ḥanbal may even have agreed with, as he himself did so during the *miḥna*. However, according to al-Ġazzālī, this was not the reason for Ibn Ḥanbal's censuring of al-Muḥāsibī but rather, his mentioning of their doctrines before replying to them to refute them, as there is no guarantee that someone reading such an exposition may be convinced by the Muʿtazilite view before reading the refutation or even be confused by it, such that the specific nature of the reply may not be fully understood. Al-Ġazzālī contends, however, that this is only true in the case of a deviant view that is not widespread, since in this case mentioning such a view which is not well known to the public would only cause them further consternation. In the case of the Muʿtazilites however, the opposite was true, since their doctrines came into the public domain due to the very nature of the *miḥna*. In this case al-Ġazzālī suggests that it is a duty to answer such widespread views by refuting them openly and that one can only achieve this by first making mention of such views and then refuting them systematically—a duty that al-Muḥāsibī gratefully undertook on behalf of his peers.

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[41] Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad [Abū Ḥāmid] al-Ġazzālī, *al-Munqiḏ min al-ḍalāl*, ed. Ǧamīl Ṣalībā and Kāmil ʿAyyād, Beirut, Dār al-Andalus, 1990, pp. 118-9.

Although al-Ġazzālī's reasoning is apparently sound, his explanation is refuted by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), who sheds further light on this controversy stating:

> Aḥmad's repudiation of al-Ḥāriṯ was not due to the reason mentioned by Abū Ḥāmid but rather it was because of him adopting the position of Ibn Kullāb regarding the correct way of [understanding] divine action (*al-ḥarakāt*)[42] and nature (*al-tarkīb*),[43] which was in agreement with that of the Muʿtazilites. However, he [Ibn Kullāb] did not agree with them with regard to negating all the divine attributes but rather both he and his associates would affirm that God, the Exalted, is above His creation, elevated above the world and characterised by attributes. They would confirm this via rational proofs even though within his methodology he would negate the occurrence of actions in God, the Exalted's essence and other matters related to divine will (*mašīʾatihi*) and choice (*iḫtiyārihi*).[44] It was on this basis that he based his opinion regarding the Qurʾān[45] and these matters are well known to those who are familiar with the statements of Aḥmad from his associates and other scholars of *ḥadīṯ* and *sunna*.[46, 47]

Therefore, in Ibn Taymiyya's opinion the dispute between Ibn Ḥanbal and al-Muḥāsibī was not related to the quotation of heretical beliefs in refutation of their proponents but rather due to a specific stance adopted by al-Muḥāsibī regarding the nature of God. This view was that divine attributes which manifest themselves as acts such as will (*mašīʾa*) are not contingent (*ḥādiṯ*) as this

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[42] Ibn Taymiyya appears to be using *al-ḥarakāt* synonymously with *al-afʿāl*.

[43] A more literal translation may be "composition" and this refers to the Muʿtazilite notion that God is "non-composite" (*ġayr murakkab*), since this would denote a complexity and multiplicity that in their view negates the concept of *tawḥīd*. In fact, Ibn Taymiyya elaborates on this further suggesting that the Muʿtazilites and those who agree with them did not mean this in the linguistic sense, since he contends that no Muslim has inferred this by using the term "*al-tarkīb*". Rather, he indicates that this actually means that God cannot be perceived through sensory perception and therefore, He cannot be "seen", this in turn being in line with the Muʿtazilite belief that there is no beatific vision in the hereafter, since this would indicate that God has a "position" and a "direction". See Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm [*šayḫ al-Islām*], *Bayān talbīs al-ǧahmiyya fī taʾsīs bidaʿihim al-kalāmiyya*, ed. Muḥammad b. Abd al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim, Mecca, Maṭbaʿat al-ḥukūma, 1972, I, p. 474.

[44] In the sense that such actions are temporal and contingent (*ḥādiṯ*).

[45] It would appear that Ibn Taymiyya is referring to attribution to al-Muḥāsibī of the opinion that a person's articulation of the Qurʾān is created (*maḫlūq*), which will be discussed later in the article.

[46] This is a further deprecation of al-Ġazzālī as Ibn Taymiyya considers him ill equipped to deal with the verification of prophetic narrations (*aḥādīṯ*) and historical reports (*aḫbār*) from the earlier generations. See Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm [*šayḫ al-Islām*], *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, ed. Muḥammad Rašād Sālim, Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 1971, VII, p. 149.

[47] *Ibid.*, VII, pp. 147-148 and cf. *Id.*., II, p. 6.

would mean that the essence of God would be continually changing and since God is not subject to change, this would be impossible. This was not only the opinion held by the group of Sunni scholastic theologians headed by Ibn Kullāb (d. ca. 239/854),[48] with which al-Muḥāsibī is commonly associated, but was further complicated by the fact that it was also the stance of Ibn Ḥanbal's arch enemies the Muʿtazilites. Although this group of theologians, as Ibn Taymiyya suggests, did not go as far as negating every divine attribute as the Muʿtazilites did, this was still a highly problematic position to hold when compared to the stoical dogmatism of Ibn Ḥanbal. Thus, it was this aberration in belief that Ibn Taymiyya contends was the main reason for Ibn Ḥanbal's rejection of al-Muḥāsibī and not his engaging the heretical sects of his time. Indeed, extending this argument further to disprove al-Ġazzālī's contention he states:

> Aḥmad, may God be pleased with him, has in fact refuted the Ǧahmiyya and others by the use of revelatory and rational proofs, and at the same time he mentioned their opinions and evidence that others did not.[49] Indeed, he presented in great detail their opinions and evidences and then invalidated them by utilising both revelatory and rational proofs.[50]

With regard to mentioning the views of heretical groups we find a similar perspective from *qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ as he states in his *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ*:

> Both the predecessors (*al-salaf*) and later scholars (*al-ẖalaf*) from imams of guidance agreed that it was permissible to quote the views of the disbelievers and atheists in their books and assemblies to make them clear to people and to refute their heresies. Although it has been reported that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal objected to al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī doing this, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal himself did something similar when he refuted the *Ǧahmiyya* and those who said that the Qur'an was created.[51]

Thus, the contention that al-Muḥāsibī made mention of the 'innovative' sects in Islamic doctrine seems to be a baseless argument, since, as *qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ has

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[48] See footnote 58 below.

[49] Perhaps referring to the work *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ǧahmiyya wa-l-zanādiqa*. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*, II, pp. 18-19.

[50] *Ibid.*, VII, p. 149.

[51] *Al-Qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ al-Yaḥṣubī, *Kitāb al-Šifāʾ bi-taʿrīf ḥuqūq al-muṣṭafā*, ed. Hayṯam al-Ṭuʿaymī and Nağīb Māğidī, Beirut, al-Maktaba l-ʿaṣriyya, 2001, pp. 371-2. In addition, one should also refer to the implausible and inaccurate explanation that al-Qārī provides in attempting to explain Ibn Ḥanbal's action. See *al-Mullā* ʿAlī l-Qārī, *Šarḥ al-Šifā li-l-qāḍī ʿIyāḍ*, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, n.d., II, p. 455.

pointed out, there is a consensus amongst both the early and later scholars of Islam that this is permissible—if the goal of it is to clarify their heresies and at the same time refute them. Indeed, this was the same goal to which al-Muḥāsibī aspired and moreover, as *qāḍī* ʿIyāḍ observes, Ibn Ḥanbal himself appropriates the same technique when refuting similar heretical views in his work *al-Radd ʿalā l-Ǧahmiyya wa-l-zanādiqa*.[52] Therefore, the claim that al-Muḥāsibī was repudiated for this reason seems unlikely, since Ibn Ḥanbal himself in this work and as the *miḥna* accounts bear witness, engaged in refutation of his opponents and their views.

It is also worth mentioning here that Ibn Ḥanbal's contention with al-Muḥāsibī may not just have been with his utilisation of *kalām* as a method but also with some the specific views he may have held regarding the doctrine surrounding the Qurʾān. There is little doubt that al-Muḥāsibī's general view regarding the Qurʾān was that of Ibn Ḥanbal, in the sense that he held that the Qurʾān was the uncreated word of God. Despite this, however, during the course of the dispute concerning the nature of the Qurʾān other, more subtle and complex debates arose. One of these concerned the physical, human articulation of the Qurʾān during recital (*al-lufẓ*); the question being of course—is this created also? Those who contended that the recital of the Qurʾān was in fact created were thus termed al-Lufẓiyya due to their belief in this specific aspect of doctrine concerning the Qurʾān and this too has been suggested as a possible reason behind Ibn Ḥanbal's contention with al-Muḥāsibī, as al-Ḍahabī states:

> Ibn al-Aʿrābī said, "Al-Ḥāriṯ studied jurisprudence, recorded *ḥadīṯ* and became familiar with the practices of the ascetics, such that he reached an [elevated] rank in knowledge. However, he spoke regarding [human] articulation [of the Qurʾān] (*al-lufẓ*) and faith (*al-īmān*) and thus, it is said that Aḥmad repudiated him such that he went into hiding for a while."[53]

The vehement opposition Ibn Ḥanbal demonstrated towards such views is fully understood when we examine other sources; for example Ibn al-Ǧawzī, relates the following, "Aḥmad b, Zanǧuwayh said that he heard Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal say, 'Al-Lufẓiyya are worse than the Ǧahmiyya.' "[54] In a similar narra-

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[52] It is worth noting that this particular work is one of the many works attributed to Ibn Ḥanbal and whose authorship is questionable. For a discussion of this issue see Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *al-Radd ʿalā ʾl-Ǧahmiyya wa-l-zanādiqa*, ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUmayra, Riyadh, Dār al-liwāʾ, 1977, pp. 72-8.

[53] Al-Ḍahabī, *Taʾriḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, p. 209 and *Siyar Aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, XII, p. 112.

[54] Ibn al-Ǧawzī, *Manāqib al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal*, p. 205.

tion we find, "Muḥammad b. Muslim said that he heard Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal say, 'Whoever said that my articulation of the Qurʾān is created (*lufẓī bi-l-Qurʾān maḫlūq*) then he is a *Ǧahmī*.'"[55] Moreover, his position is further clarified by the following statement, "Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Hāniʾ said that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal was asked should one pray behind someone who says that their articulation of the Qurʾān is created, he said 'He should not be prayed behind, nor should he be sat with and no-one should pray [the funeral prayer] over him'."[56]

Thus, the issue is far more serious than al-Subkī seems to indicate, since the issue of articulation of the Qurʾān was not merely an issue that should not be raised but also, if one did so and in addition, believed in it, he was clearly considered by Ibn Ḥanbal to be a disbeliever (*kāfir*). This is indicated not only by the phrase, "…no-one should pray [the funeral prayer] over him" but also due to Ibn Ḥanbal's position regarding the Ǧahmiyya in general, to which al-Lufẓiyya are compared in these narrations. As such, Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion of someone who considered their own personal articulation of the Qurʾān to be created is unequivocal; he considered them non-Muslims and it would suggest that, if he did indeed think that al-Muḥāsibī adopted this article of faith, then it would be a manifest reason for his repudiation of him. Despite this, however, it does not entirely explain the initial comment made by Ibn Ḥanbal, quoted at the beginning of this section, since once again—as was the case with the accusation that al-Muḥāsibī engaged in innovation—it stands to reason from the above quote of Ibn Ḥanbal himself, that he would not spend even one moment in the company of someone who was even suspected of holding such a belief.

In a similar and somewhat related debate surrounding the nature of the Qurʾān, yet another complex theological concept is proposed as the reason for Ibn Ḥanbal's rejection of al-Muḥāsibī. In an almost reversed argument, the question in hand does not concern the human being's articulation of the Qurʾān but the divine pronunciation of speech, in the sense that, is this articulation of words accompanied by sound or not? In this regard we find the following quote in al-Futūḥī's *Šarḥ al-Kawkab al-munīr*:

> Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Raǧab [al-Ḥanbalī] said in *al-Manāqib*, "And from the innovations concerning the Qurʾān that Aḥmad would reject is the statement that God spoke without sound (*bi-ġayri ṣawt*), such that he [Ibn Ḥanbal] would reject this view and attribute innovation to the one who held it." It has been said that Aḥmad renounced al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī for this reason. Abū l-Abbās [Ibn Taymiyya]

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[56] *Ibid.*, p. 207.

comments, "This was the reason for Aḥmad's abjuration of al-Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī and others like him from the Kullābiyya."[57, 58]

On the same theme and illustrating this point further we find that al-Ḏahabī relates in his *Taʾrīḫ al-Islām* that al-Marwaḏī also stated that:

Abū Bakr b. Ḥammād told me that al-Ḥāriṯ passed by him one day and Abū Ḥafṣ al-Ḥaṣṣāf was with him, so he said to him, "O Abū ʿAbd Allāh, do you say that Allāh's speech [is articulated] with sound?" So he said to Abū Ḥafṣ, "Answer him" and Abū Ḥafṣ replied, "If I say it is [articulated] with sound, then I also need to say this or that (*kaḏā wa-kaḏā*)."[59] So I said to al-Ḥāriṯ, "What do you say?" and he replied, "Abū Ḥafṣ has already answered you." So Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal then said, "From this day I will warn [others] against Ḥāriṯ."[60]

Thus, having consulted the previous two texts regarding the articulation of divine speech, one may conclude that such an issue was 'cut and dried', since al-Muḥāsibī appears to have adopted this particular theological stance to which Ibn Ḥanbal was equally opposed. However, the complexity of the issue and al-Muḥāsibī's view regarding it is alluded to by al-Kalābāḏī (d. 380/990) in his discussion of the nature of divine discourse when he states:

The vast majority of them [the Sufis] agreed that God the Exalted's speech consists of neither letters (*ḥurūf*) nor sound (*ṣawt*) or words (*ḥiǧāʾ*). Indeed, letters, sounds and words are indicators of speech yet they require specific devices and bodily parts [for articulation], which are the uvula, the mouth and the tongue and since God the Exalted has no bodily parts, nor a need for devices, His speech does not consist of words and sounds. Some the most revered [Sufis] said regarding His

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[57] The first generation of Sunni scholastic theologians (*mutakallimū ahl al-sunna*) associated with ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd b. Kullāb (d. ca. 239/854) who engaged in scholastic theology so as to defend the beliefs of the 'orthodox' majority from the innovations of deviant sects and included in addition to al-Muḥāsibī, such luminaries as Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Qalānisī. See Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Šahrastānī, *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Fāḍilī, Beirut, al-Maktaba l-ʿaṣriyya, 2002, I, p. 74; ʿAlī Sāmī l-Naššār, *Našʾat al-fikr al-falsafī fī l-Islām*, Cairo, Dār al-maʿrifa, 1978, I, pp. 265-284; W. Mongomery Watt, *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1962, pp. 58-9, 64 and 136 and *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, Oxford, Oneworld Publications («Oneworld Classics in Religious Studies series»), 2002, pp. 282 and 286-289.

[58] Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Futūḥī, *Šarḥ al-Kawkab al-munīr [al-musammā bi-Muḫtaṣar al-Taḥrīr]*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiqī, Cairo, Maktabat al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya, 1953, p. 47.

[59] Meaning that one would then have to elaborate regarding the modality of how the sound is produced.

[60] Al-Ḏahabī, *Tārīḫ al-Islām*, XVIII, pp. 209-10.

speech, "That whoever speaks with words then he is deficient (*maʿlūl*) and whoever speaks sequentially [i.e. one word after another] is in need (*muḍṭarr*)."

Another group of them said that the speech of God does consist of words and sounds as they claimed that speech is not known any other way, despite their affirmation that it is an uncreated attribute of God the Exalted in His essence and this was the view of Ḥāriṯ al-Muḥāsibī and from the later scholars, Ibn Sālim. The basis for this is the following: since it has been established that God the Exalted is pre-eternal (*qadīm*) and that He does not resemble His creation in any way, nor do any of His attributes resemble those of created beings, then His speech will not consist of words and sounds like that of created beings.[61]

On examining this text, one realises the subtlety of al-Muḥāsibī's argument, which is typical of the *kalām* style; he was in fact saying that God's speech does consist of sounds but also, that since He does not resemble His creation in any way, then neither does His speech. The sounds that articulate His speech do not resemble His creation either and al-Muḥāsibī, in his view at least, eliminates the possibility of anthropomorphism (*al-tašbīh*).[62] As we have seen, however, this would most likely have been rejected by Ibn Ḥanbal for a variety of reasons; firstly, he may have regarded the question itself to be innovation and as such, whatever one's personal conviction regarding the issue it is unacceptable to even discuss such a matter, as it has no precedent amongst the preceding generations. Secondly, the argument proposed above adopts a dialectical technique typical of the *kalām* style and is, therefore rejected as a method of proof.[63] Thirdly, it is unlikely that he would have even entertained the argument in the first place, as Ibn Ḥanbal often appears only to have been interested in the answer to the question itself rather than the rationale behind it. However, as was the case with the issue of the created nature of the Qurʾān's articulation, this does not explain Ibn Ḥanbal's comment at the beginning of this section, as one may safely assume that he would not have entertained al-Muḥāsibī's discourse for one moment, if he thought that it was underpinned by an unacceptable aberration in a believer's faith such as this.

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[61] Muḥammad b. Isḥāq al-Kalābāḍī, *al-Taʿarruf li-maḏhab ahl al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Aḥmad Šams al-Dīn, Beirut, Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1993, p. 42.

[62] In fact Ibn Taymiyya comments that this opinion, i.e. that God articulated His words with sound (*takallama bi-ṣawt*), as quoted here by al-Kalābāḍī is in opposition to the opinion of Ibn Kullāb and therefore, concludes that this was one of the opinions that he revoked later in life, which in turn constituted his "repentance" (*tawba*). See Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wal-naql*, II, p. 6 and VII, pp. 148-149.

[63] It should also be noted here that Ibn Ḥanbal actually held that there was evidence from the revelatory sources concerning this issue and there was no need to exercise one's own rational faculties in trying to explain it. See al-Futūḥī, *Šarḥ al-Kawkab al-munīr*, pp. 47-8.

Thus, it is clear from the discourse presented here that one of the most manifest explanations for Ibn Ḥanbal's abjuration of al-Muḥāsibī is the latter's engagement in scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) to which Aḥmad was completely averse. Although the specific feature of al-Muḥāsibī's engagement in *kalām* is not entirely clear, as alluded to in the above discussion, nevertheless it provides a strong basis for the suggestion that this was the primary factor in the dispute between these two eminent personalities of the scholarly community in 2nd/8th-3rd/9th centuries Baghdad. As such Ibn Ḥanbal's comment, "I don't think that I have seen a people such as these nor anyone speak regarding the realties [of faith] (*al-ḥaqāʾiq*) like this man, yet despite what I have said, I do not think that you should keep their company" may be understood in the light of al-Subkī's comment mentioned above, "Know that *al-imām* Aḥmad, may Allāh be pleased with him, was highly critical of anyone who spoke regarding scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) out of fear that it would lead to that which is inappropriate." Therefore, although Ibn Ḥanbal may well have been impressed by al-Muḥāsibī's discussion of spiritual matters, he was not willing to allow a student to keep his company whilst the possibility existed that al-Muḥāsibī may engage in *kalām* during his discourse, which as Aḥmad viewed it, was an unacceptable risk and indeed, detrimental to the religion as a whole, even if it was on the premise of defending the faith.

Conclusion

Possible reasons for Ibn Ḥanbal's stance regarding our subject have been elaborated above and although the most apparent of Aḥmad's objections to al-Muḥāsibī was his utilisation of scholastic theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*), it is likewise possible that the suggestions posited above are to a lesser or greater extent, equally feasible or indeed, one cannot rule out a combination of factors.

In addition, what is also clear is that al-Muḥāsibī was very much a product of his time, in the sense that he engaged himself with the various fields of learning of the day and making the most of his presence in the thriving state capital. Indeed, he appears to have developed his own scholarly methodology in dealing with the deep, moral introspection of the human soul and actively engaged in the theological debates of his era, as to provide a rational defence of the Sunni position.

Furthermore, it was this very approach, which in many ways seems diametrically opposed to the staunch traditionist stance, that caused him to be reviled in his own time and in subsequent generations and consequently, by the

same token he may be viewed equally as a 'victim' of his own era, falling foul of the scholars whose very view he was trying to defend.

In addition, this incident also provides a fascinating insight into the battle for supremacy with regard to who has religious authority within nascent Sunni 'orthodoxy'. The 'battle' was 'won' ultimately by the ascendant traditionists who seem to have not only enjoyed a degree of state support in the post-*miḥna* period but also the backing of the public at large.

This situation did not continue, however, and the trend towards a *kalām*-style discourse set by the likes of Ibn Kullāb, al-Qalānisī and al-Muḥāsibī was perpetuated by the advent of Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī l-Aš'arī (d. 324/935) and the subsequent school associated with him. Therefore, one of the great ironies of this very incident is that the defence of Sunni 'orthodoxy' via rational and dialectic methods as employed by scholastic theology became a normative practice in the subsequent period with the genesis, development and maturing of Sunni *kalām*.

Indeed, in the centuries that followed Aš'arism would ultimately wrestle religious authority in the field of theology from Ḥanbalism and despite the attempted recovery of authority by Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and those of his ilk, the Aš'arites cemented their position as the spokesmen of Sunni theology until the modern period. Moreover, this is a position which al-Muḥāsibī had no small part in playing as al-Baġdādī (d. 429/1037-8) observes, "And the books of al-Ḥāriṯ b. Asad on scholastic theology (*al-kalām*), jurisprudence (*al-fiqh*) and Prophetic tradition (*al-ḥadīṯ*) were relied upon by the theologians (*mutakallimūn*), jurists (*fuqahā'*) and Sufis from our companions [i.e. the Aš'arites]."[64]

[64] ʿAbd al-Qāhir b. Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad al-Baġdādī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn*, Istanbul, Maṭbaʿat al-dawla, 1928, pp. 308-309.